

# Chapter 6

## Governance Factors That Influence the Internationalization of Tourism Destinations: The Perspective of Portuguese DMOs

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### ABSTRACT

*The literature is highlighting that research on the internationalization of destinations is scarce. This chapter presents a validation of the governance factors which contribute to the internationalization of tourism destinations. A survey was carried out on Portuguese DMOs with responsibilities in the areas of tourism and local/regional development (N=147). The 'Questionnaire on Internationalization of Tourist Destinations' was submitted to content, reliability, and construct validations through exploratory and confirmatory second-order factor analysis. Governance factors influencing the internationalization of destinations were F1-Collaboration and F2-Networks. F1 associates items related to stakeholder involvement in destination decisions. F2 highlights the interaction between stakeholders, whose collective action is oriented towards active participation in decisions and leadership. The perception of Portuguese entities with different levels of influence on tourism development allows the systematization of results that meet some priority lines defined in the Tourism Strategy 2027.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter aims to present the model explaining the governance of tourist destinations, with a view to their internationalization.

In addition, the relationships between the factors associated with this model are clarified and the steps inherent to the various validation studies of the instrument built for this purpose are explained, namely content, construct and reliability validation.

This study is part of a broader investigation, which proposes a model for the internationalization of destinations, in which the systemic perspective of tourism is strengthened, due to the relationship between the dimensions of territory, product, governance model and function of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) (Mira, & Breda, 2019). The results indicate that each of the second order constructs (dimensions) significantly reflects the latent variable it sets out from ('internationalization of destinations'). In addition, the inter-correlation between the scales and the constituent factors indicates that the strongest associations are established between the 'territory' and 'product' dimensions, as well as between 'governance' and 'DMOs'. The connection between the territory's economy and the product's competitiveness is confirmed, as well as between DMOs and governance of the network destination, a link also defended at the theoretical level. Therefore, the DMOs and the network governance of destinations integrate the various elements of the tourism system, guarantee their coordination and the involvement of stakeholders in this process (Mira, & Breda, 2019; Valeri, 2016; Valeri and Baggio, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2021; Baggio and Valeri, 2020). The perspective that the governance of the territory facilitates its organization as learning and innovation systems inspired by the uniqueness and identity of destinations is justified.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Governance**

The governance models of the networked territory trigger intense collaborative, cooperation and negotiation relations necessary for the sharing and creation of resources, to respond to the challenges of competition. These relationships and the discursive activity linked to them generate a dynamic that is reflected in the design of new products and services, as well as in different practices that make their marketing and promotion more effective (Booyens, 2016; Boyens & Rogerson, 2016; Clavé & Wilson, 2017; Escah & Vaudor, 2014; Valeri, 2021).

The network management of innovation, knowledge management and marketing promotes joint work between entities from the public and private sectors and other interested parties, resulting in an increase in the power of communities and local governments to lead the destination's project (Badulescu, Hoffman, Badulescu, & Simut, 2016; Rovira, 2016; Sertakova, Koptseva, Kolesnik, Libakova, Luzan, & Sergeeva, 2016). This movement can have as multiplier effects the creation of new intersectoral and inter-destination networks, giving rise to the appearance of their own governance structures, shifting the emphasis of national policies and systems to regional economic structures (Blasco, Guia, & Prats, 2014a; Bohlin, Brandt, & Elbe, 2016). In this context, we are witnessing a new configuration of public management, which should start to contemplate the impact of market transactions and actors in decision-making on the most appropriate policies for the destination project, at the local level (Bohlin et al., 2016). These

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